

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08
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OMB-01 CEA-01 SY-05 MCT-01 OC-06 CCO-00 PC-01
A-01 OPR-02 /143 W
-----065548 081312Z /45

P R 081155Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8932
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KABUL 5485

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

TEHRAN: PLEASE PASS TO UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S PARTY

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PGOV, ECON, AF
SUBJ: POLITICAL PURGE HIGHLIGHTS EVENTS OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS

1. SUMMARY. AN ANTICIPATED SPLIT BETWEEN THE TWO
WINGS OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS SURFACED
OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS, RESULTING IN THE SO FAR
BLOODLESS "EXILE" OF ONE FACTION'S (PARCHAM) LEADERS.
AMONG THOSE PURGED TO AMBASSADORSHIPS ABROAD ARE THE
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HERETOFORE NUMBER TWO MAN, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
BABRAK KARMAL (TO PRAGUE), AND INTERIOR MINISTER
NOOR AHMAD NOOR (TO WASHINGTON). THE EPISODE HAS
FURTHER INCREASED THE POLITICAL POWER OF REVOLUTIONARY
COUNCIL PRESIDENT NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAHI AND DEPUTY
PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAFIZULLAH
AMIN, WHO HAVE CLEARLY EMERGED AS THE TWO DOMINA-

TING PERSONALITIES IN THE NEW REGIME. THE SOVIETS HAVE APPARENTLY NOT INTERVENED IN THIS INTERNAL POWER STRUGGLE.

2. WHILE KABUL AND MOST OF THE COUNTRYSIDE SEEM CALM ON THE SURFACE, THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION REMAINS HIGHLY UNSTABLE. OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, THE EMBASSY HAS BECOME APPRISED OF SEVERAL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL OPPOSITION GROUPS WHICH SEEM INTENT ON OVERTHROWING THE TARAKI GOVERNMENT. LAST WEEK IN KABUL A NEWLY APPOINTED UPPER GRADE HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTRY OFFICIAL WAS ASSASSINATED, A SMALL ARMED ATTACK OF SOME SORT OCCURRED AGAINST AN ARMY BASE JUST OUTSIDE OF KABUL, AND THERE HAVE BEEN WIDESPREAD REPORTS THAT SOVIET ADVISORS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN NANGARHAR AND PAKTIA PROVINCES. THE 11:00 P.M. - DAWN CURFEW PERSISTS, GROUPS OF TANKS CONTINUE TO BE STATIONED ABOUT THE CITY, AND EVERY NIGHT THE STREETS SURROUNDING RADIO AFGHANISTAN (NEXT TO THE U.S. EMBASSY) ARE CORDONED OFF AND HEAVILY GUARDED.

3. THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT'S BASE OF SUPPORT IS THIN, BUT THE EVIDENCE IS NOT CLEAR THAT ANY OPPOSITION FORCE CAN MUSTER THE POWER TO DISLODGE
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THE TARAKI GOVERNMENT, OR OFFSET WHATEVER ACTIONS THE SOVIETS MIGHT TAKE TO MAINTAIN THE INCUMBENT REGIME.

4. AS FOR U.S. PROGRAMS AND INTERESTS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS BLOCKED THE TRIP OF AN AFGHAN USICA LIBRARIAN TO A TRAINING COURSE IN WASHINGTON AND HAS PROPOSED A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE AFAMEC STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM. THE EMBASSY ATTACHE AIRCRAFT HAS ALSO FOR THE MOMENT BEEN DENIED PERMISSION TO FLY. WHILE THE PEACE CORPS HAS NOT YET FORMALLY RECEIVED ANY NEW REQUESTS FOR VOLUNTEERS, IT HAS LEARNED SOME MAY BE IN THE OFFING. ON THE USAID FRONT, THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED A PRE-COUP OFFER OF \$3.2 MILLION AID FOR FURTHER HELMAND VALLEY PROJECT WORK, THEREBY PUTTING THE BALL IN THE USG'S COURT FOR PROCESSING THIS FIRST POST-COUP FINANCIAL OBLIGATION. IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE SECOND LARGEST AMERICAN INTEREST HERE, INDAMER, HAS BEEN ORDERED TO STOP OPERATIONS BY MID-JULY. OFFICIAL AND MEDIA TREATMENT OF OUR FOURTH OF JULY, HOWEVER, WAS MORE UPBEAT THAN WE EXPECTED. END

SUMMARY.

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-----065692 081312Z /41

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TEHRAN: PLEASE PASS TO UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S PARTY

5. POLITICAL PURGE APPARENTLY WENT SMOOTHLY.
THE "EXILE" TO AMBASSADORSHIPS ABROAD OF A NUMBER OF HIGH-RANKING
MEMBERS OF THE FORMER PARCHAM WING OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA), INCLUDING ITS LEADER BABRAK KARMAL TO
PRAGUE, AND INTERIOR MINISTER NOOR AHMAD NOOR TO WASHINGTON,
HIGHLIGHTED POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. A POSSIBLE SPLIT BETWEEN THE
PARTY'S TWO FACTIONS HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED BY MOST OBSERVERS,
ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT EXPECTED SO SOON AFTER THE REVOLUTION.
OTHER POTENTIAL SCHISMS COULD DEVELOP WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP
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ALONG PARTY-NONPARTY, MILITARY-CIVILIAN, OR PRO AND LESS PRO-SOVIET LINES.

6. BABRAK KARMAL, LEADER OF THE FORMER PARCHAM PARTY, AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SINCE THE REVOLUTION, HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED AS THE NEW AFGHAN ENVOY TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA. PRIOR TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, RUMORS WERE RIFE THAT HE WAS REFUSING TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY AND WAS UNDER SOME FORM OF HOUSE ARREST. OTHER LEADING PARCHAMISTS APPOINTED TO AMBASSADORSHIPS ABROAD ARE INTERIOR MINISTER NOOR AHAMD NOOR TO WASHINGTON, SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER ANAHITA TO BELGRADE, FOREIGN MINISTRY SEC GEN ABDUL WAKIL TO LONDON, MAHMOUD BARYALAI (BABRAK'S BROTHER) TO ISLAMABAD, AND DR. NAJIB TO TEHRAN. EVEN THOUGH THE REGIME HAS BEEN PATENTLY ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN QUICK AGREEMENTS ON THESE APPOINTMENTS, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, NONE OF THE NEW AMBASSADORS HAS YET LEFT THE COUNTRY. AT THE MOMENT, THE MILITARY SEEMS LOYAL TO TARAKI AND IS BACKING THE PURGE.

7. AS A RESULT OF THESE EVENTS, TARAKI AND AMIN HAVE CLEARLY EMERGED AS THE TWO MOST POWERFUL POLITICAL FIGURES. IN FACT, A GENUINE CULT OF PERSONALITY HAS BEEN CREATED AROUND TARAKI. HIS PICTURE IS NOW EVERYWHERE AND HE IS CONSTANTLY REFERRED TO AS "OUR GREAT LEAERR." CERTAIN OTHER MINISTERS, WHO ARE EITHER KNOWN OR SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF THE FORMER KHALQ WING OF THE PDPA, HAVE BEEN PROMINENTLY FEATURED IN THE AFGHAN MEDIA, WHILE KNOWN PARCHAMISTS HAVE VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED FROM THE PUBLIC EYE. THOSE WHOSE STARS APPEAR TO BE RISING ARE: EDUCATION MINISTER PANJSHIRI; PUBLIC HEALTH MINISTER DR. SHAH WALI; FINANCE MINISTER MEESAQ; AND, HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTER SOOMA. PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, DEFENSE MINISTER MAJOR GENERAL ABDUL QADER'S POLITICAL CLOUT HAS ALSO REPORTEDLY BEEN STRENGTHENED AS A RESULT OF THE DECLINE OF THE PARCHAMISTS.

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8. INTERNAL SECURITY REMAINS AN ISSUE, AS POOPOSITION MAY BE GROWING. MORE THAN TWO MONTHS AFTER THE REVOLUTION, THE REGIME STILL HAS NOT QUELLED ALL OPPOSITION IN THE EASTERN PROVINCES OF PAKTIA AND KONAR. RASORTS OF FIGHTING AND AIR STRIKES CONTINUE, THUS ILLUSTRATING HOW INTRACTABLE THESE REMOTE REGIONS CAN BE.

9. REPORTS ABOUND THAT SOME OFFICIALS OF THE NEW REGIME HAVE BEEN ASSASSINATED BY UNKNOWN CULPRITS. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT KNOWN KILLING WAS THAT OF ABDURRAZEK URIAKHEL, PRESIDENT OF THE TEACHERS TRAINING INSTITUTE IN THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION; RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS EXECUTION IS CLAIMED BY A CLANDESTINE OPPOSITION GROUP. URIAKHEL WAS REPORTEDLY A RELATIVE OF FOREIGN

MINISTER AMIN, AND A KHALQIST, AND HIS FUNERAL WAS ATTENDED BY FOUR CABINET MINISTERS. OTHER OSTENSIBLE VICTIMS OF OPPOSITION VIOLENCE HAVE BEEN THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR IN BAGHLAN, AND SEVERAL SUB-GOVERNORS IN THE PROVINCES AROUND KABUL. RUMORS CONTEND FURTHER THAT AS MANY AS SIXTEEN SOVIET ADVISORS HAVE BEEN KILLED BY ASSASSINS, BUT WE CANNOT CONFIRM THIS INFORMATION. WHATEVER THE FACTS BEHIND THESE REPORTS MAY BE, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT SOME VIOLENCE DIRECTED AT REGIME REPRESENTATIVES HAS OCCURRED, AND THAT THE OMNI-PRESENT HEAVILY-ARMED GUARDS SURROUNDING INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL LEADERS ARE WARRANTED.

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10. SEVERAL MISSION OFFICERS HAVE BEEN CONTACTED IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS BY AFGHANS CLAIMING TO REPRESENT VARIOUS OPPOSITION GROUPS. AT THIS POINT, WE HAVE NO FIRM INFORMATION REGARDING HOW LARGE

THESE ORGANIZATIONS MAY BE, NOR HOW MUCH SUPPORT
THEY MAY HAVE HERE OR ABROAD. WHAT SEEMS CERTAIN
IS THAT OPPOSITION EXISTS, THAT IT SEEMS TO BE
GROWING, AND IT IS TRYING TO ORGANIZE. IT IS NOT
YET CLEAR WHETHER ANY OF THESE GROUPS HAS COALESCED
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INTO A FORCE WHICH COULD LAUNCH A MILITARY COUNTER-
COUP AND, PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY, OFFSET WHATEVER
ACTIONS THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT UNDERTAKE IN SUPPORT
OF TARAQI'S PRO-SOVIET GOVERNMENT.

11. U.S. GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS REGISTER SOME SETBACKS:

ONE PRIVATE FIRM'S FUTURE IS CLOUDY. USG PROGRAMS
EXPERIENCED SOME SETBACKS DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS.
FOR ONE, THE EMBASSY ATTACHE AIRCRAFT IS GROUNDED.
AFTER FIRST GETTING ORAL PERMISSION FROM THE DEFENSE
MINISTER TO FLY IT, THE AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTRY
TURNED THE OFFICIAL WRITTEN REQUEST DOWN, PENDING
CLARIFICATION OF THE LEGAL BASIS FOR PLANE'S USE.
USICA'S OPERATIONS ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES TOO WHEN
THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE
SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR AFGHAN EXCHANGE STUDENTS,
AND ALSO BLOCKED - UP TO NOW - A PLAN TO SEND THE
AFGHAN USICA LIBRARIAN TO WASHINGTON FOR A TRAINING-
ING COURSE.

12. IN GENERAL, OUR USAID OPERATIONS ARE MOVING
AHEAD. THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCEPTANCE OF A REQUEST
THAT A PRE-REVOLUTION OFFER OF \$3.2 MILLION FOR A
HELMAND VALLEY PHASE II PROJECT BE PUT INTO EFFECT,
WAS A SIGNIFICANT INDICATION THAT THE REGIME WANTS
TO MAINTAIN AN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE U.S.

13. AN AMERICAN-OWNED FIRM, INDAMER, HOWEVER, HAS
ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES WITH THE GOVERNMENT OVER
THE PAST TWO WEEKS ALLEGEDLY REGARDING ITS PAST TAX
LIABILITIES. INDAMER HAS DECIDED TO END ITS OPERA-
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TIONS AND WISHES TO SELL ITS ASSETS TO THE GOVERNMENT.
THE OUTLOOK FOR THIS IS AT PRESENT NOT PROMISING AND
CONSEQUENTLY THE FIRM COULD EVENTUALLY BECOME A VICTIM OF THE
REGIME'S APPARENT INTENTION TO NATIONALIZE ALL FOREIGN TRADING

OPERATIONS.

14. ONE BRIGHT SPOT IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD IS THE REPORTED DECISION BY ARIANA AFGHAN AIRLINES TO PURCHASE AN AMERICAN-BUILT WIDE BODY COMMERCIAL AIRLINER. THE ARIANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONCLUDED ITS MEETING IN LONDON THIS PAST WEEK, AND APPEARS TO HAVE DECIDED IN FAVOR OF AN AMERICAN-MADE AIRCRAFT (THE PACKAGE SALE IS WORTH ABOUT \$50 MILLION) ALTHOUGH NO OFFICIAL DECISION HAS YET BEEN ANNOUNCED. SUCH A DECISION COULD GO FAR IN ENSURING THE CONTINUANCE OF THE PAN AM 49 PERCENT INTEREST IN ARIANA, THE SINGLE LARGEST U.S. PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN AFGHAN-ISTAN.

15. CONCLUSIONS. THE FIRST SPLIT WITHIN THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF THE NEW REGIME HAS RESULTED IN THE ANNOUNCED "EXILE" OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BABRAK KARMAL TO PRAGUE, AND MANY OF HIS SUPPORTERS TO VARIOUS OTHER AMBASSADORSHIPS. REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL PRESIDENT TARAHI IS CLEARLY THE DOMINANT POLITICAL POWER IN THE COUNTRY, AND THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA IS PLAINLY BUILDING A TARAHI CULT OF PERSONALITY. THE SO-FAR SMOOTH AND PEACEFUL PURGE OF THE BABRAK FACTION COULD ALLOW TARAHI AND HIS COLLEAGUES TO FOCUS MORE OF THEIR ENERGIES ON THE MASSIVE PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING THIS BACKWARD COUNTRY, ALTHOUGH FURTHER SPLITS WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP COULD OPEN AT ANY TIME.

16. SECURITY REMAINS A PRIMARY CONCERN AS RUMORS OF INDIVIDUAL KILLINGS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRO-CONFIDENTIAL

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LIFERATE. MOREOVER, WHILE THERE ARE INCREASING INDICATIONS THAT OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE FORMING, WE ARE NOT SURE THAT ANY OF THESE GROUPS HAS THE POWER AND SUPPORT TO MOUNT A SERIOUS COUNTER COUP. AT THE MOMENT, THE TARAHI GOVERNMENT IS IN CONTROL OF KABUL AND MOST OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, REORGANIZATIONS, PARTY SCHISMS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KABUL05485
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780280-0962
Format: TEL
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780783/aaaacrsz.tel
Line Count: 377
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: b83d6479-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2079683
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL PURGE HIGHLIGHTS EVENTS OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PGOV, ECON, AF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b83d6479-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014